THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • TUESDAY • MARCH 02, 2021 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 24 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

LPG COST UP BY ₹25; WHOPPING ₹125 RISE SINCE FEBRUARY

Fluctuations in international price and Dollar exchange rates behind the sharp rise. New rates kick into force on March 1

SIXTH HIKE SINCE DECEMBER 2020

In Delhi, a cylinder will now cost ₹819; in Kolkata, ₹845; in Mumbai, ₹819 and in Chennai, ₹835. LPG prices were hiked across all categories by ₹25 per cylinder on February 4; ₹50 on February 15; and ₹25 on February 25. Prices have been climbing since December. There were indications that the prices would possibly cool in a few weeks as state elections are due

PETROL, DIESEL PRICE STABLE FOR 2ND DAY

- Petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged for the second day in a row after hitting an all-time high. Branded, premium or additive mixed petrol, however, crossed ₹100 mark on Saturday
- The rates of regular petrol had last month crossed ₹100-mark at a few places in Rajasthan and MP, which levy the highest VAT

₹3,663

PER KILO-LITRE HIKE IN AVIATION TURBINE FUEL

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Modi dispels vax hesitancy, pain point is enrolling

Software glitches make registration difficult, govt asks people to use the CoWIN website instead of the app to book appointments

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

ON a day the nationwide Covid-19 vaccination drive opened for people above 60 and those between 45 and 59 years with specific comorbidities, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the first one to take the jab at the AII India Institute of Medical Sciences here.

Glitches in the CoWIN platform, which has been designed to drive the initiative, meant that most of those who wanted to register for inoculation could not do so. However, over 1.47 lakh citizens in the new category of beneficiaries still managed to take the shots on the first day of the second phase of the drive.

The Health Ministry later said the CoWIN app was meant for use only by the administrators and that the registration for vaccination has to be done through the portal. "Registration and booking for appointment for #COVID19 vaccination is to be done through #CoWIN Portal:www.cowin.gov.in. There is no #CoWIN App for beneficiary registration. The App on Play Store is for administrators only," the ministry tweeted.

About 4.27 lakh jabs were administered on Monday, 65% of whose beneficiaries were healthcare and frontline workers, who are being covered from before.

Among the general citizens, 1,28,630 were in the elderly category, while 18,850 were those under 45 with comorbidities.

Though the government did not specify it, sources said most of the jabs in this category were through walk-in facilities. The Centre, however, did not make public the state-wise breakup of the vaccination figures for the day. It also did not share the breakup of shots carried out in government and private facilities.

Over 29 lakh potential beneficiaries registered on the CoWIN portal on Monday. Of them, about 26 lakh are citizens while the rest are healthcare and frontline workers. About 6.44 lakh appointments were booked by citizen beneficiaries. The total vaccination count in the country stood at 1,47,28,589 on Monday as per the provisional reports. They include 66,95,665 healthcare workers who took the first dose and 25,57,837 healthcare workers who took the second shot. P9

Prime Minister Narendra Modi sporting an Assam gamucha, being administered Bharat Biotech's Covaxin by a nurse who hails from Puducherry, as a Keralite nurse watches on, in New Delhi on Monday. Both states and the UT go to polls in April | PTI

Triple whammy: Milk price, auto, BMTC fares may go up

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

PEOPLE who are already paying heavily for petrol, diesel and LPG cylinders will have to be ready to burn a bigger hole in their pocket in the near future as the State Government is planning to increase autorickshaw and BMTC bus fares and also the price of milk and milk products.

The State Government had recently revised the taxi fares by allowing operators to collect ₹75 for non-air-conditioned and ₹100 for air-conditioned cabs as the minimum charge for the first 4 km. After that, it is ₹24 per kilometre for AC cabs and ₹18 for non-AC taxis.

A senior BMTC official said that the transport corporation has proposed an 18-20 per cent increase in fares for both AC and non-AC buses. "We are seeking a hike as the diesel price has gone up and BMTC has suffered a revenue loss because of Covid. We have approached Transport Minister and Deputy CM Laxman Savadi, but he is not keen on the hike. But he assured us that he will discuss the issue with CM B S Yeddiyurappa on the quantum of hike. The decision will be taken after the budget," an official, requesting anonymity, said. Savadi, however, told *TNIE* categorically that the government is not intending to increase BMTC fares.

On autorickshaw fares, Transport Department Secretary Anjum Parvez said the drivers' unions are seeking an increase in the minimum fare for the first 2 km from the present ₹25 to ₹36 as the LPG price has gone up. P7

App issues affect vax drive in K'taka

RANJANI MADHAVAN & IFFATH FATHIMA @ Bengaluru

CHAOS, anger, confusion, crowd... This was the scene at some Covid-19 vaccination centres in Bengaluru on day 1 of Phase-3 of the drive, meant for those above 60 and aged between 45 and 59 with comorbidities.

For administrators, the CoWIN portal not opening and not showing the list of registered beneficiaries was the biggest obstacle on Monday.

The 68-year-old Satyanatha Krishnappa, who has diabetes, wanted to be the first to get vaccinated when he heard the news of Phase-3.

He went to Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute, but was redirected to Vani Vilas Hospital. After finding his way to the vaccination block, he was made to sit for an hour as the staff were waiting for the green signal from higher-ups.

"Then, I took my son's help to register on CoWIN portal for vaccination at Mallige Hospital. They asked me to give my phone number and leave, as they were not prepared. I came to KC General Hospital where they asked me to wait again. The health administration has failed. They should not have started it on March 1 if they were not prepared. They should not make senior citizens run around in the hot sun," Satyanatha said, adding that he had to walk around 9 km through this ordeal.

Dr M S Anand, a dental surgeon with diabetes and blood pressure, registered online for the vaccination. However, he was made to wait from 9 am to 1 pm to get the shot at KC General Hospital.

At CV Raman General Hospital, around 10 people turned up, but left without getting vaccinated as the process never took off.

MORE REPORTS: P3

Retired Army officer Subramanian K N gets his jab in Bengaluru on Monday.

102-yr-old among oldest in state to get Covid shot

A 102-year-old retired Indian Army veteran from Bengaluru was among the oldest people to be vaccinated in Karnataka on Monday. The centenarian, Subramanian K N, received his Covid-19 shot at Columbia Asia Hospital in Hebbal, Bengaluru. P3

Will you wed her: SC to alleged rapist

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

IN a shocking statement, Chief Justice of India S A Bobde on Monday asked a 23-year-old government servant whether he was ready to marry the woman who has accused him of rape.

The observation came while the court was hearing a case against Mohit Subhash Chavan, a technician in the Maharashtra State Electric Production Company Ltd, who was accused of raping a minor girl in 2014-15. He was allegedly 17-18-years-old then, and the girl was his distant relative and a student of Class 9 at the time. Last month, the Bombay High Court had cancelled the anticipatory bail granted to Chavan by a lower court, on an application filed by the girl. He had then challenged this order in the Supreme Court. During the hearing, CJI Bobde asked Chavan's lawyer, "Will you marry her?"

"You should have thought before seducing and raping the young girl. You knew you are a government servant. We are not forcing you to marry. Let us know if you will, otherwise you will say we are forcing you to marry her," the CJI said. The lawyer consulted Chavan and then told the court that he initially wanted to marry her, but the girl refused. "Now I cannot, as I am already married."

The bench granted him interim protection from arrest for four weeks, allowing him time to file for regular bail.

According to the FIR, the girl was in Class 9 when the accused started following her home from school and then one day, he forcibly entered her house and raped her.

In her complaint, the girl alleged that he threatened to throw acid on her and kill her brother if she did not consent to a sexual relationship.

CHINESE HACKERS TARGETED INDIA?

A US firm has stated that amidst the border tension with India, a Chinese government-linked group of hackers targeted the country's critical power grid system through malware | P9

EXPRESS READ

France's Sarkozy gets 1 yr in jail for corruption

Paris: A court found former Frenh President Nicolas Sarkozy guilty of corruption and influence peddling on Monday and sentenced him to a year in prison, which he can serve at home. P16

Cong's Moily distances himself from G-23

Bengaluru: Distancing himself from the Jammu meet of G-23 leaders, Congress leader M Veerappa Moily on Monday backed Rahul Gandhi's return as president of the party. P4

SSLC EXAMS FROM JUNE 21 TO JULY 5

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

SSLC examination 2020-21 will be held from June 21 to July 5, announced Primary and Secondary Education Minsiter S Suresh Kumar on Monday. This is a week's delay from the tentative timetable announced about a month ago.

The change was necessitated as the SSLC schedule clashed with the Second PU exams between May 24 and June 16, Kumar said.

Last year, there was a problem in fixing the exam date although the syllabus was completed. However this year, the syllabus had to be completed, the Primary and Secondary Education Minister added.

Workshops will be held for headmasters in each taluk to follow best practices. Kumar will meet Block Education Officers of all districts from April 2 to oversee preparations for the examination.

"Our exam centres are not battlefields but sports grounds. Students should enjoy," he told officials.

CONTINUED ON: P7

Higher than expected spectrum bids on Day-1

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

DAY one of India's first spectrum auction in five years saw substantially higher competition than expected, with the government receiving bids worth ₹77,146 crore. Analysts had expected the auctions to fetch only around ₹45,000-50,000 crore. However, while all three major telcos — Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea — participated in the bidding, the premium 700 MHz and 2500 MHz bands remained without suitors.

The 700 MHz band had remained untouched during the last auctions held in 2016, with the industry finding the pricing expensive. The government consequently brought the reserve price down to ₹6,568 crore per MHz for this round from ₹11,485 crore in 2016, but industry sources say telcos consider the new prices inflated, too. And since one-third of the 2308.80 megahertz of airwaves being auctioned this round are in the 700 MHz band, the higher-than-expected bids received for the other bands still only account for a fraction of the ₹3.92 lakh crore worth assets on offer. The Communications Ministry said, "There have been bids for 849.20 MHz so far. Excluding spectrum in 700 MHz and 2500 MHz bands, this is almost 60 per cent of the spectrum put to auction."

SBI

SBI MEGA E-AUCTION IS HERE.
BIDS OPENING FOR 1000+ PROPERTIES.

Date of e-Auction 5th March, 2021

To register, log on to any of the below-mentioned websites:

Website	Helpline
https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp	033-40602403/40067351/40626253 40645316/40645207/40609118

Auction of a wide variety of open plots, residential, industrial and commercial properties.
Loans available for successful bidders, subject to eligibility.

For more information:
https://sbi.co.in/web/sbi-in-the-news/auction-notices/bank-e-auctions,
https://sbi.co.in/web/sbi-in-the-news/auction-notices/mega-e-auction &
https://ibapi.in

CYBER WHISPERS

Social media: Citizens to 'spy' on citizens? Beware!

CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

NEXT time you post on Facebook or Instagram, or tweet a meme about a government policy, beware! For, even if a couple of your hundreds of contacts have signed up to be a volunteer for the Ministry for Home Affairs 'Cyber Crime Volunteer Programme', they can report any post that annoys or worries them.

These ordinary citizens are being asked to judge if a post threatens -- anything from sovereignty of our nation and public order, to international relations and child rights -- and alert the national-level agency.

The volunteer programme is supposed to act as a facilitative tool between ordinary citizens and the government for the prevention of cybercrime.

Any citizen can register himself/herself under one of three categories: 'Cyber Volunteer Unlawful Content Flagger', 'Cyber Awareness Promoter', and 'Cyber Expert'. Post-registration, the individual can directly report "unlawful content" being circulated over the Internet, which presumably includes social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, among others.

Maitreyi Krishnan, advocate, said, "This is a violation of the fundamental right to privacy. On what basis is the government asking people to spy on each other? This will lead to all kinds of vigilantism."

Vivek Sood, senior advocate, Supreme Court and Delhi High Court, said it was a violation of the right to privacy of the citizens.

CONTINUED ON: P7